



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council



COUNTING ON CULTURE: TAKING STOCK OF CHANGE

REPORT 2021



PROJECT SUMMARY

Complementing the census, this project considered people's worldviews to inform innovative decision making for future needs. Outcomes reflected ecological patterns of population through cultural threads over a dynamic period of time, thereby creating a complex weave of knowledge, potentially revealing new trends and themes.

The project sample was the people of Stretford Road, Hulme, Manchester M15 (A5067). The transformations of this place reflect the social, economic, environmental and cultural changes of people's fortunes as technologies, architecture, lifestyles, identities and values evolve.

Gathering people's cultural narratives, the project adopted a 'storying' approach, to capture the making and telling of stories as important factors in understanding their meaning. These may not be reduced to abstract data, as they reflect more nuanced experiential knowledge. The project invited each recipient to meet on an online video platform. A series of specific questions allowed the recipients to describe their past ten years, their present situation and future ten year prospects, paying attention to socio-cultural inter-connectivity. The recorded and visual material was anonymised, curated and presented on Z-arts' website as an audio and visual exhibition.

INTERVIEWS

Stretford Road, Hulme, Manchester M15 (A5067) was the project location for participating respondents. The history of the street provided the context of place. Representing diverse communities, the respondents were the first level of project participation. Their wider connections then expanded the idea of community and place to culture, turning the notion of passive audience into dynamic society.

Currently, the Census gains information from locations about people and property. That information is processed into linear, quantitative data for specific audiences wanting to learn facts about specific predetermined demographic and material categories. Audiences can access these facts via the Census website. This project, however, learned about people's experiential knowledge, their realities, attitudes, behaviours, perceptions, beliefs and values – their life stories. This qualitative information was pursued in a nonlinear way, following narratives as emergent socio-ecological patterns, connecting and weaving narratives of communities and their cultures. Interpretation of the narratives was of interest to the respondents, the population at large and is of academic interest to those engaged in philosophy, politics, economics, social geography, ethnography, anthropology, literature and the creative arts. Embedding time as a dynamic factor will enhance qualitative foresight planning for a culture of regenerative community resilience. The main barrier was the stringent application of GDPR as this required a transparent and rigorous anonymisation process to gain the trust of the respondents and permit free access to their personal narratives.

The project gathered people's cultural narratives through a 'storying' approach. How the stories were created and told are factors in understanding their meaning and value. Such understanding cannot be reduced to abstract data, as they reflect more nuanced experiential knowledge. This research method gained vital understandings of people's worldviews – the qualities and values they hold about their place in society. A constant factor in this process was inquiry into people's notion of time and their concept of 'now', based on the last decade and the next decade. This provided a starting point to question memory and expectation as a dynamic cultural experience of how people perceive themselves.

Please see the Interview Questionnaire, Consent Form and Protocol in the Appendix.

WORKSHOPS

According to Wikipedia, an annual report is a comprehensive report on a company's activities throughout the preceding year. Annual reports are intended to give shareholders and other interested people information about the company's activities and financial performance. They may be considered as grey literature. Most jurisdictions require companies to prepare and disclose annual reports, and many require the annual report to be filed at the company's registry. Companies listed on a stock exchange are also required to report at more frequent intervals (depending upon the rules of the stock exchange involved).

Other information deemed relevant to stakeholders may be included, such as a report on operations for manufacturing firms or corporate social responsibility reports for companies with environmentally or socially sensitive operations. In the case of larger companies, it is usually a sleek, colorful, high-gloss publication.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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EXHIBITION

Counting on Culture 30th April

The exhibition consists of two elements. The 13' visual sequence containing artworks by the young people of Z-arts curated by Nayna Lad and a soundtrack of the young people's voices narrating the interview quotes from the research. The visual sequence and the soundtrack can be played separately or simultaneously. The exhibition will run for the next 3 years: <https://www.z-arts.org/the-art-of-storytelling/>

Valeria Vargas and David Haley with Z-arts were delighted to present the online exhibition, Counting on Culture, co-created and co-curated by the young people of Stretford Road and artist Nayna Lad.

Dr David Haley said:

"The Census gathers snapshot data in a scientific way to provide statistical information, but we expanded the process for people to give us their worldviews about their past and future prospects. And who better to let us know about the future than the amazing young people of Z-arts? The way Z-arts' team and the young people worked with us was truly innovative for research, to understanding the realities of how we live. And it was such good fun!"

Valeria Vargas commented:

"It was a great pleasure working with colleagues at Z-arts, young people, and creative communities. The project wove artistic, collaborative and research elements that are not often found on common ground."

Those with a connection to Manchester's Stretford Road, where Z-arts is based explored their journeys and relationships with where they live, as the project talked to people who were from all over the world to create something uniquely Mancunian. We've created an exhibition to give an insight into how people live that complements the data-based nature of the official census – where the census asks very specific questions, this project prompted people and let them speak to represent themselves.

Liz O'Neill, was delighted by the result of this unorthodox partnership:

"I am so pleased to see the brilliant creativity that has come forth from these workshops, and how our young people think about home, belonging and their futures. Z-arts strives to be a home away from home for our children and young people, so exploring how we live has been a fun and unusual way to explore what we mean to our families. By sharing stories and creating art, we've been able to create something very special through this partnership"

CREDITS

Counting on Culture: Taking Stock of Change

Research programme to investigate culture and futures

Principal Investigator: Valeria Vargas

Lead artist: Dr David Haley

The Art of Storytelling

Sequence of workshops for young people at Z-arts

Lead artist: Nayna Lad

Project manager: Gill Balfour

Artists: Children (can we add their names?)

Online exhibition

Artists: Stretford Road communities

Exhibition design: Nayna Lad

Web design and marketing: Sairah Rehman

Sound design: Jerrell Barnwell

Special thanks to Liz O'Neill (Artistic Director & CEO at Z-arts) and all at Z-arts and The Whitworth.

Project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), part of UK Research and Innovation, and supported by Low Carbon and Sustainable Futures (LCSF) part of the Ecology and Environment Research Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University.

REFLECTION

Project structure flexibility

Project partners

Organic methodology

Workshops

Interviews and interviewees

The exhibition

Pandemic context

Financial overview

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Appendices

Interview questions

Question 1. How are you linked to Stretford Road?

Question 2. How is it that you live and what is it that you do?

Question 3. Where do you come from and where are you going? (Place, identity and time)

Questions 4. How big is your community and how diverse do you think it is?

Question 5. Can you name one major event in your life?

Question 6. Can you share with us an object or story for our online exhibition?

Question 7. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendices



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Participant Information Sheet

Project: Counting on Culture: Taking Stock of Change

Summary

- This information sheet is about a research project.
- The project is to find out more about how people live in 2021.
- Valeria Vargas and David Haley are the researchers.
- You are invited to be interviewed for 20 mins.
- All your information will be made anonymous.
- The final information will contribute to an online exhibition.
- Please see full information below.
- Thank you for considering participating in this project.

1. Invitation to research

We are Valeria Vargas, researcher at Manchester Metropolitan University and David Haley, Freelance Artist. The funding for this project comes from the Arts and Humanities Research Council from the call Engaging the Public with Census 2021. Our project partners are Z-Arts and The Whitworth. We would like to invite you to take part in this research in which we are trying to **consider people's worldviews to inform innovative decision making for future needs**. Outputs will include an online exhibition at the end of April 2021 hosted by Z-Arts on their website www.z-arts.org, and a publication. The exhibition will last a maximum of 3 years. You have been invited because you have self-identified as someone connected to Stretford Road.

2. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited because you are connected to Stretford Road in some way.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. We will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which we will give to you. We will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw before the opening of the exhibition without giving a reason. You are also able to request deletion of your information after this point, but unfortunately this cannot be guaranteed. However, we will always strive to meet these deletion requests where feasible.

4. What will I be asked to do?

We will interview you in an informal way. This will be done online. The online interview is voluntary and if you agree to participate in it you will be asked to answer 6 open questions. We will audio record (not visually) the interview via an online secure platform MS Teams. After the analysis of the interview, we will send you a copy of the



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information we plan to use for the exhibition and academic journal article for you to agree.

5. Are there any risks if I participate?

Every effort is taken to anonymise the information that you provide prior to publishing on Z-Arts website. However, due to the relatively small research population and qualifying criteria for those participants (i.e. those who have a connection to Stretford Road), full anonymity cannot be completely guaranteed. It is possible that third parties may be able to identify you from the information you provide (in particular neighbours, friends and family). We do not foresee any risk to you as result of this, and take all possible steps to reduce the likelihood of this occurring, but it is important that you consider this prior to agreeing to take part in the project.

6. Are there any advantages if I participate?

There are no material advantages if you participate but you may see how you are part of a community connected to Stretford Road.

7. What will happen with the data I provide?

When you agree to participate in this research, we will collect from you personally-identifiable information such as name, email and telephone number. This information will be kept separate from your interview answers and will not appear in the exhibition or academic journal article. Answers that might include multiple identifiers will be separated. You will be given the opportunity to check the anonymised data that will be used for the outputs and reject or accept its inclusion in the project.

We will also ask you if you would like to provide photographs of any objects that you would like to share. We intend to publish some of these images on the Z-Arts website. We will only use these images where they do not contain any identifiable information.

During the study, we will be working with a freelance artist, who will interview the participants with the PI, co-curate the exhibition with Z-Arts communities and co-author the academic paper.

The Manchester Metropolitan University ('the University') is the Data Controller in respect of this research and any personal data that you provide as a research participant.

The University is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and manages personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's Data Protection Policy.



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As a public authority acting in the public interest we rely upon the 'public task' lawful basis to process your personal data in this way. When we collect special category data (such as medical information or ethnicity) we rely upon the research and archiving purposes in the public interest lawful basis.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained.

We will not share your personal data collected in this form with any third parties.

If your data is shared this will be under the terms of a Research Collaboration Agreement which defines use, and agrees confidentiality and information security provisions. It is the University's policy to only publish anonymised data unless you have given your explicit written consent to be identified in the research. **The University never sells personal data to third parties.**

We will only retain your personal data for as long as is necessary to achieve the research purpose. Data will be stored securely and only used for the purposes of this project. All data will be carefully anonymised by the Principal Investigator. You will be given the opportunity to check the anonymised data that will be used for the outputs and reject or accept its inclusion in the project.

For further information about use of your personal data and your data protection rights please see the University's Data Protection Pages (<https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/data-protection/>).

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

After the analysis of the interview, we will send you a copy of the information we plan to use for the exhibition and academic journal article for you to agree.

9. Who has reviewed this research project?

The Ethics committee at Manchester Metropolitan University has reviewed this research project as well as the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

10. Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

For further information, please contact Valeria Vargas, 01612474634, v.vargas@mmu.ac.uk, Dr. Gethin Evans, Faculty Head of Research, Ethics and Governance gethin.evans@mmu.ac.uk.
For data protection contact: legal@mmu.ac.uk, call: 0161 247 3331 or write to: Data Protection Officer, Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH.



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If you have any concerns regarding the personal data collected from you, our Data Protection Officer can be contacted using the legal@mmu.ac.uk e-mail address, by calling 0161 247 3331 or in writing to: Data Protection Officer, Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH. You also have a right to lodge a complaint in respect of the processing of your personal data with the Information Commissioner's Office as the supervisory authority. Please see: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT

These are the questions we will ask you:

Question 1. How are you linked to Stretford Road?

Question 2. How is it that you live and what is it that you do?

Question 3. Where do you come from and where are you going? (Place, identity and time)

Question 4. How big is your community and how diverse do you think it is? (Including humans and other than humans)

Question 5. Can you name one major event in your life?

Question 6. Can you share with us an object or story for our online exhibition?

Question 7. Is there anything else you would like to share?

And, can you recommend another person to be interviewed?

CONSENT FORM

Counting on Culture: Taking Stock of Change

Participant Identification Number:

		Please tick your chosen answer	YES	NO
1.	I confirm that I have read the participant information sheet version V1, date 22 nd March 2021 for the above study.	☐	☐	
2	I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐	☐	
3	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.	☐	☐	
4	I agree to participate in the project to the extent of the activities described to me in the above participant information sheet.	☐	☐	
OPTIONAL				
5	I agree to my participation being audio recorded for analysis. No audio clips with my voice or information perceived to be identifiable will be published.	☐	☐	
9	I understand and agree that data collected during the project will be shared publicly online. The data for publication online will be agreed with me.	☐	☐	
11	I understand and agree that my words may be quoted anonymously in research outputs. The data for publication will be agreed with me.	☐	☐	
12	I wish to be informed of the outcomes of this research. I can be contacted at:	☐	☐	
14	I give permission for a fully anonymised version of the data I provide to be deposited in an Open Access repository so that it can be used for future research and learning.	☐	☐	

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature

<u>Valeria Ruiz Vargas</u>	<u>16/03/2021</u>
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Valeria Ruiz Vargas

Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature
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Interview protocol - Counting on Culture: Taking Stock of Change

PART I. PRE-INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INSTRUCTIONS The participants receive the consent form and information sheet about the project. The researchers and participants agree on a date for the interviews. The researchers clarify any questions the participants may have. The participants sign the consent form. The researchers send a MS Teams invite with a link to join the interview.

PART II. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PREAMBLE INSTRUCTIONS *Good morning (afternoon). Our names are Valeria Vargas and David Haley. Thank you for joining us online. This interview is an informal conversation about life in Stretford Road, Manchester in March 2021. The purpose is to add to the kind of information the Census uses. get your views and perceptions of your experiences inside and outside of the classroom. We are not interested in statistics and numbers but in people's quality of life and lifestyles. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel. All the answers will be carefully anonymised, and you will be asked to agree to us using them.* (The researchers remind the participant about the information sheet and consent form).

CONSENT FORM INSTRUCTIONS *Thank you for sending us the signed consent form.*

ONLINE RECORDING INSTRUCTIONS *If it is okay with you, we will be online recording our conversation in a secure platform MS Teams. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential.*

QUESTIONS:

Question 1. How are you linked to Stretford Road?

Question 2. How is it that you live and what is it that you do?

Question 3. Where do you come from and where are you going? (Place, identity and time)

Questions 4. How big is your community and how diverse do you think it is?

Question 5. Can you name one major event in your life?

Question 6. Can you share with us an object or story for our online exhibition?

Question 7. Is there anything else you would like to share?

CLOSING STATEMENT: *We are very grateful for your contribution. It has been a pleasure. We will be in touch with news about the exhibition and other outputs if this is of interest to you. For this we will use the contact details you provided in the consent form.*